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AUTHOR Ralston, Penny A.
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ABSTRACT

Demographic trends in the United States indicate that the population is increasingly growing older. The literature suggests that the attitudes of others are critical for the adjustment of the elderly in society. A study was conducted to determine adolescents' knowledge of, attitudes toward, and experiences with older adults. Subjects were 790 secondary school students enrolled in vocational home economics programs in 35 junior and senior high schools in Iowa. Respondents completed the "My Views about Older People" questionnaire which was developed using a variety of standardized scales and items. The preliminary findings revealed that the students surveyed generally had positive attitudes toward older people yet had some stereotyped beliefs regarding older adults. Although their knowledge levels were high, the respondents appeared to have misconceptions related to biology of aging, demographics of aging, "age-related" personality traits and interests, competence/effectiveness and aging, and services for older people. Most respondents had experiences with older people, but activities seemed to be of short duration and low frequency. Most respondents also had experiences with a specific older person who was usually the grandmother. Frequency of contact varied from every day to several times a year. This person was generally described in a very positive way. These findings will be used in planning curriculum for secondary home economics programs. The survey instrument and directions to teachers for administering it are appended. (NB)

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Secondary Students' Knowledge of, Attitudes toward, and Experiences with Older Adults

FINAL REPORT

Submitted to Iowa Department

of Public Instruction

Des Moines, IA

Submitted by

Penny A. Ralston, Ph.D.
Associate Professor
Home Economics Education
Iowa State University
Ames, IA 50011

June 30, 1985

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Secondary Students' Knowledge of, Attitudes toward, and Experiences with Older Adults

I. Background and Objectives

Demographic trends in the United States indicate that our population is increasingly growing older. This is particularly true of Iowa where 13.3 percent of the population is 65 years of age and older, compared with the national average of 11.3 percent. In several Iowa counties (more than half), the proportion of older people exceeds 15 percent.

The literature suggests that attitudes of others are critical for the adjustment of the elderly in society (Ivester & King, 1977; Lester, 1982; Olejnik et al., 1977). It has also been suggested that attitudes are learned behaviors that have their bases upon one's experiences and knowledge (Lester, 1982; Trent et al., 1979). These three factors (attitudes, knowledge, and experiences) are interrelated and tend to determine one's behavior toward aging and the elderly.

Because adolescents may be included in the social environment in which the elderly interact, it becomes important to identify the extent to which adolescents' views affect their interaction with the elderly (Ivester & King, 1977). In addition, if attitudes are learned behaviors, then perhaps the evidence that adolescents generally do not possess positive attitudes toward the elderly should provide the impetus for targeting educational efforts in secondary school students (Lester, 1982). Because of demographic trends, therefore, it is becoming increasingly important that attempts be made to determine secondary students' knowledge, attitudes and experiences in relation to older adults. This information can be used for curriculum planning for vocational home economics programs.

The purpose of this study was to determine secondary students' knowledge of, attitudes toward and experiences with older adults. The specific objectives of the study were to:

1. determine the knowledge of secondary students regarding older adults;
2. assess the attitudes of secondary students toward older adults;
3. determine experiences of secondary students with older adults;
4. determine the relationship of secondary students' knowledge, attitudes and experiences to (a) grade level, (b) race/ethnicity, (c) birth order, (d) socioeconomic status, (e) contact with elderly, (f) living arrangement, (g) place of residence, (h) involvement in organizations, and (i) gerontology-related education; and
5. make recommendations related to curriculum on aging for secondary vocational home economics programs.

II. Procedures

This project involved gathering data from secondary students enrolled in vocational home economics programs in Iowa. The following were specific procedures used in order to achieve the objectives of the study:

1. An advisory committee was identified for the study, and included a home economics teacher educator, two home economics teachers, a school administrator, a gerontology specialist, a research specialist, and an older adult (see Appendix A). The committee members were consulted on a one-to-one basis during the project.

2. The literature was reviewed regarding research on secondary students' knowledge of, attitudes toward and experiences with older adults.

3. The instrument, "My Views about Older People," was developed using a variety of standardized scales and items (see Appendix B).

   (a) Attitudes were assessed using the Kogan Attitude Toward Older People Scale which is a Likert scale consisting of 34 short statements (17 positive and 17 negative). The scale measures attitudes toward old people with respect to both norms and individual differences, stereotypes of old people, and misconceptions about older people (Mangen & Peterson, 1982). Seven possible responses were used ranging from "1" (strongly disagree) to "7" (strongly agree).

   (b) Knowledge of older people was determined using an adapted version of Palmore's Facts on Aging Quiz (Form II) (Palmore, 1981). The test consists of 30 items, with possible responses of "true," "false," or"undecided."

   (c) Experiences with older people was measured using a 14 item scale developed specifically for the study. Items concerned how often respondents were involved in activities such as doing household chores, watching television, or having short visits with older people (i.e., relatives or non-relatives 65 years of age or older). Possible responses ranged from "1" (never) to "6" (every day). Experiences with a specific older person were determined by six items that identified relationship of specific older person to respondent (e.g., grandmother, great aunt, etc.), age of specific older person, type of contact and frequency of contact. Peterson's Across-age Semantic Differential (Mangen & Peterson, 1982) was used to determine how the respondent would describe this specific older person.

   (d) Items were developed to determine respondents' background characteristics (sex, age, grade level, size of community, ethnic/racial group, parents' occupation and educational level, living arrangement, birth order, participation in organizations and home economics courses taken), perception of aging and frequency of contact with older relatives and non-relatives.

The instrument was reviewed by the Human Subjects Review Committee to assure that criteria regarding informed consent had been met.

4. The sample was identified, using stratified random sampling procedures. First, 30 school districts were randomly selected from the list of vocational home economics programs in Iowa, including five districts considered metropolitan areas. A letter was sent to an administrator (superintendent and/or principal) in each school district to gain approval for participation in the study (see Appendix C). A replacement list was used to identify schools when participation was not approved. When approval was received, a follow-up letter was sent to each home economics teacher to gain their approval and to determine number of students in grades 7, 10 and 12 who could participate. Criteria for participation included having a class of at least 15 students with an approximate equal representation of males and females. A total of 31 high schools and 5 junior high schools were identified for the study.

5. Data were collected by having the teachers administer the questionnaire to their students. The questionnaires were sent to each teacher with specific instructions for administration (see Appendix E). Teachers were also sent a "Comment Sheet" to relate their observations of students during data collection and any situations or events that might have affected students' responses (e.g., fire drill, discipline problems, etc.). Questionnaires were received from a total of 35 schools.

6. Data were coded, transferred to the computer, and analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSSx). Preliminary findings are included in this report.

III. Activities to Promote Educational Equity

Care was taken so that both males and females were included in the sample of the study. In addition, urban schools were included to increase the probability that students from various racial/ethnic backgrounds also would be included.

IV. Audience Served

Characteristics of sample will be described in Section VII, Report of Findings.

V. Duration and Location of Activity

Data were collected in Iowa schools (as described in Section II) in March and April of 1985.

VI. Evaluation Procedures

The project was generally evaluated in terms of: (1) quality of instrument, (2) quality of sampling procedures, and (3) interpretation of findings. The instrument, which mostly consisted of standardized scales and items, was reviewed by both a research specialist and a gerontology specialist to determine content and face validity. The instrument was pilot tested with secondary students at Welch Junior High School and Griswold High School to determine its useability. Sampling procedures were identified using a consultant at the Iowa State University Statistical Laboratory. Finally, advisory committee members were used in conceptualizing the study, and will be involved in interpreting the findings.

VII. Report of Findings

1. Characteristics of Sample

The majority of the sample (n=790) was female (64%) and of Caucasian ethnic/racial background (91.7%). The respondents came from a variety of locations, including rural areas (37.2%), towns (less than 5,000) (28.1%), cities (5,000 - 50,000) (21.2%) and metropolitan areas (13%). The majority of the sample had both mothers (52.9%) and fathers (53.9%) who had a high school degree as the highest level of education. Grade levels included 7th (24.7%), 9th (6.8%), 10th (5.9%), 11th (20.5%) and 12th (41.5%). Age of students ranged from 12 - 20 years. Respondents generally lived with their mother (91.4%) and father (77.4%) and had siblings (brothers - 51.7%; sisters - 51.5%).

The majority of respondents had or were taking foods (56%) and family living (50.1%) and over a third had or were taking child development (35.9%) and clothing (38%). Respondents were involved in church youth groups (39.3%), FHA/HERO (15.2%), 4-H (11.1%), Girl/Boy Scouts (5.2%), other organizations (18.1%), or were not a member of any organization (37.5%). A large majority (83%) indicated that they had not had aging as a topic in a course at school or in a program outside of school.

2. Attitudes toward Older People

Preliminary findings show that secondary students generally had positive attitudes toward older people. For example, the majority strongly agreed that "old people have the same faults as anybody else" (53%) and strongly disagreed that "old people are irritable, grouchy and unpleasant" (54.5%). In addition, a large percentage strongly disagreed that "in order to maintain a nice residential neighborhood, it would be best if too many old people did not live in it" (49%) and that "old people tend to let their homes become shabby and unattractive" (64%). The youth in this study also strongly agreed that "old people's accounts of their past experiences were interesting and entertaining (66.8%) and that "older people preferred to work as long as possible rather than be dependent on anybody" (60.6%).

Although their attitudes were generally positive toward older people, there was also evidence that respondents believed some stereotypes of aging. For example, a majority strongly disagreed that "most old people need no more love and reassurance than anyone else" (55.6%), suggesting that old people need love more than younger people. Also, a large percentage strongly agreed that most old people are constantly complaining about the behavior of the younger generation" (34%).

3. Knowledge of Older People

Of the 30 true/false items, the majority of respondents answered 17 correctly. Incorrect responses were obtained for five major areas: (1) biology of aging (decline in senses with age), (2) demographics of aging (percentage of older people in U.S. population and in nursing homes, income level of older people), (3)"age-related" personality traits and interests ("inflexibility," "irritability" and "boredom" of older people, religiousity and aging), (4) competence/effectiveness and aging (motor vehicle and work-related accidents of older people compared to younger people, older people's work effectiveness) and (5) services for older people (attention given to aged by medical practitioners, older people's proportionate share of nation's income).

4. Experiences with Older People

There appeared to be a great deal of variety in the type and frequency of experiences that respondents had with older people. However, most of the youth surveyed were involved in activities of short duration (e.g., household chores, yard work, etc.) and of low frequency (e.g., once a year, several times a year). For example, a large percentage of respondents did the following with older people several times a year: receive money (48.3%), receive advice (35.2%), run errands (35.9%), do household chores (31.3%), do yard work (32.6%) and watch television (36.9%). In contrast, activities of longer duration that were "never" done with older people included taking a trip (44.6%), taking walks (50.5%), doing crafts (53.8%), and writing letters (59.7%).

A large majority (92.7%) of respondents indicated there was one specific person they had contact with, usually a grandmother (56.8%). Age of this person ranged from 54 to 101, and frequency of contact included every day (19.2%), once a week (33%), once a month (19.6%), several times a year (25%), and once a year (2.9%). Data from the semantic differential scale showed that a large percentage of respondents described this person as pleasant (45.6%), cooperative (33.2%), loving (65.2%), understanding (45.6%), considerate (46.7%), independent (41.8%), ambitious/hardworking (42.5%), enthusiastic (34.5%), open-minded (26.5%), alert (32.4%) and active (27.7%). In contrast, respondents were more neutral in regard to whether this person was young or old, flexible or inflexible, fast or slow, and strong or weak.

5. Summary

The preliminary finding of this study indicate that the secondary students surveyed generally had positive attitudes toward older people, yet had some stereotyped beliefs regarding this age group. Although their knowledge levels were high, the respondents appeared to have misconceptions related to biology of aging, demographics of aging, "age-related" personality traits and interests, competence/effectiveness and aging, and services for older people. Most respondents had experiences with older people, but activities seemed to be of short duration and low frequency. Most respondents also had experiences with a specific older person who was usually the grandmother. Frequency of contact varied from everyday to several times a year. This person was generally described in a very positive way.

VIII. Unexpected Outcomes/Recommendations for Replication of Activity

Generally there were few unexpected outcomes from the project. Future plans are to conduct a more thorough and sophisticated analysis, interpret the findings, and use this information in planning curriculum for secondary home economics programs.

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APPENDICES

A. Advisory Committee Members

B. Instrument, "My Views about Older People"

C. Letter to Administrators

D. Letter to Teachers

E. Instructions to Teachers for Administration of Questionnaire

F. Comment Sheet

Appendix A

Advisory Committee Members

1. Dr. Frances Smith
   Associate Professor
   Department of Home Economics Education
   Iowa State University

2. Ms. Betty Yungschlager
   Home Economics Teacher
   Griswold High School
   Griswold, Iowa

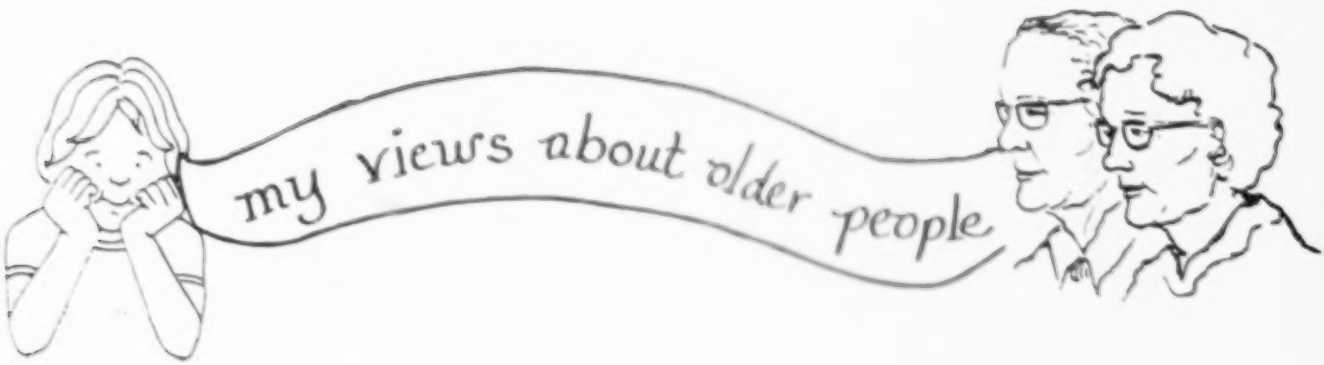
3. Ms. Roseva Johnson
   Home Economics Teacher
   Welch Junior High School
   Ames, Iowa

4. Dr. Lu Kiser
   Assistant Superintendent
   Ames Community School District
   Ames, Iowa

5. Dr. Ed Powers
   Head and Professor
   Department of Family Environment
   Iowa State University

6. Ms. Bernice Bateson
   Ames, Iowa

7. Dr. Alyce Fanslow
   Distinguished Professor
   Department of Home Economics Education
   Iowa State University


my views about older people

My Views About Older People

Dear Student:

This study is being conducted by the Department of Home Economics Education at Iowa State University to find out your views about older people. Home Economics students in schools across Iowa are being involved. The results will be used to assist home economics teachers in teaching about aging.

Your name will in no way be associated with your responses, and all responses will be kept in the strictest confidence. Your participation is voluntary, and you are free to withdraw from this study at any time. We appreciate your willingness to participate in the study.

You will notice that the term "older people" is used throughout the questionnaire. For this study, older people is defined as those 65 years of age or older.

I. Attitudes Toward Older People

Directions: Please read each of the following statements carefully. Circle the appropriate response, using the following scale:

If you strongly agree with the item, circle "7".
If you strongly disagree with the item, circle "1".
If you neither agree nor disagree with the item, circle "4". A score of "2"or "3" indicates the degree to which you disagree with the item; a score of "5" or "6" indicates the degree to which you agree with the item.

	Strongly Disagree			Neither Agree Nor Disagree			Strongly Agree
1. When you think about it, old people have the same faults as anybody else.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. Most old people need no more love and reassurance than anyone else.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. It would probably be better if most old people lived in residential units with people of their own age.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. Most old people are very relaxing to be with.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. If old people expect to be liked, their first step is to try to get rid of their irritating faults.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

	Strongly Disagree		Neither Agree Nor Disagree				Strongly Agree
6. Most old people make one feel ill at ease (uncomfortable).	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7. Most old people get set in their ways and are unable to change.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8. Most old people tend to keep to themselves and give advice only when asked.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9. It would probably be better if most old people lived in residential units that also housed younger people.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10. Most old people are constantly complaining about the behavior of the younger generation.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11. You can count on finding a nice residential neighborhood when there is a sizeable number of old people living in it.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12. Most old people make excessive demands for love and reassurance.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
13. Most old people are capable of new adjustments when the situation demands it.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
14. It is foolish to claim that wisdom comes with old age.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
15. In order to maintain a nice residential neighborhood, it would be best if too many old people did not live in it.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
16. Old people should have more power in business and politics.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

		Strongly Disagree			Neither Agree Nor Disagree			Strongly Agree
17.	There are very few exceptions, but in general most old people are pretty much alike.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
18.	Most old people are really no different from anybody else; they are as easy to understand as younger people.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
19.	Most old people tend to let their homes become shabby and unattractive.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
20.	One of the most interesting and entertaining qualities of most old people is their accounts of their past experiences.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
21.	Most old people would prefer to continue working just as long as they possibly can rather than be dependent on anybody.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
22.	Most old people are irritable, grouchy and unpleasant.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
23.	Most old people seem to be quite clean and neat in their personal appearance.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
24.	Most old people spend too much time prying into the affairs of others and giving unsought advice.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
25.	Most old people bore others by their insistence on talking about the "good old days."	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
26.	People grow wiser with the coming of old age.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
27.	Most old people should be more concerned with their personal appearance; they are too untidy.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

	Strongly Disagree			Neither Agree Nor Disagree			Strongly Agree
28. There is something different about most old people; it's hard to figure out what makes them tick.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
29. Old people have too much power in business and politics.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
30. One seldom hears old people complaining about the behavior of the younger generation.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
31. It is evident that most old people are very different from one another.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
32. Most old people would prefer to quit work as soon as pensions or their children can support them.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
33. Most old people can generally be counted on to maintain a clean, attractive home.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
34. Most old people are cheerful, agreeable, and good humored.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

II. Knowledge of Older People

Directions: For the items below, please circle "T" if you believe the statement is true or "F" if you believe the statement is false. If you are not sure or undecided about the answer, circle "U". For this quiz, the "aged" and "old people" are defined as those 65 years of age or over.

T U F 1. The majority of old people (past age 65) are senile (i.e., defective memory, disoriented, or demented).

T U F 2. All five senses tend to decline in old age.

T U F 3. Most old people have no interest in, or capacity for, sexual relations.

T U F 4. Lung capacity tends to decline in old age.

T U F 5. The majority of old people feel miserable most of the time.

T U F 6. Physical strength tends to decline in old age.

T U F 7. At least one tenth of the aged are living in long-stay institutions (i.e., nursing homes, mental hospitals, homes for the aged, etc).

T U F 8. Aged drivers have fewer accidents per person than drivers under age 65.

T U F 9. Most older workers cannot work as effectively as younger workers.

T U F 10. About 50% of the aged are healthy enough to carry out their normal activities.

T U F 11. Most old people are set in their ways and unable to change.

T U F 12. Old people usually take longer to learn something new.

T U F 13. It is almost impossible for most old people to learn new things.

T U F 14. The reaction time of most old people tends to be slower than reaction time of younger people.

T U F 15. In general, most old people are pretty much alike. .

T U F 16. The majority of old people are seldom bored.

T U F 17. The majority of old people are socially isolated and lonely.

T U F 18. Older workers have fewer accidents than younger workers.

T U F 19. Over 15% of the U.S. population are now age 65 or over.

T U F 20. Most medical practitioners tend to give low priority to the aged.

T U F 21. The majority of old people have incomes below the poverty level (as defined by the Federal Government).

T U F 22. The majority of old people are working or would like to have some kind of work to do (including housework and volunteer work).

T U F 23. Older people tend to become more religious as they age.

T U F 24. The majority of old age are seldom irritated or angry.

T U F 25. The health and socioeconomic status (that is, education, occupation and income) of older people as compared to younger people in the year 2000 will probably be about the same as now.

T U F 26. A person's height tends to decline in old age.

T U F 27. More older persons (over 65) have chronic illnesses that limit their activity than younger persons.

T U F 28. Older persons have more acute (short-term) illnesses than persons under 65.

T U F 29. The aged do not get their proportionate share (about 11%) of the nation's income.

T U F 30. The proportion of Blacks among the aged is growing.

III. Experiences With Older People

Directions: We would like to know your experiences with older people. This may include relatives or non-relatives who are 65 years of age or older. Please read each of the following statements and respond in terms of the frequency with which you have the experience with an older person. Each question does not have to relate to the same older person. Use the following possible responses:

1 - Never
2 - Once a year
3 - Several times during the year
4 - Once a month
5 - Once a week
6 - Everyday

How often do you . . .

_____ 1. receive money from older people.

_____ 2. receive advice from older people.

_____ 3. run errands for older people.

_____ 4. do household chores for older people.

_____ 5. do yard work for older people.

_____ 6. attend church with older people.

_____ 7. watch television with older people.

_____ 8. take a trip with older people.

_____ 9. take walks with older people.

_____ 10. do crafts/hobbies with older people.

_____ 11. have short visits with older people.

_____ 12. write letters to older people.

_____ 13. talk on the telephone to older people.

_____ 14. receive letters from older people.

IV. My Experiences With An Older Person

Directions: Now we would like for you to think of one specific older person that you have had contact with. This person may or may not be a relative, but is someone you see or talk to and may confide in. Please answer the following questions about this older person.

1. Do you have an older person that you have had contact with?
   ___ 1. yes
   ___ 2. no (skip to Part V)

2. Is this older person your . . . (check one)
   ___ 1. grandmother
   ___ 2. grandfather
   ___ 3. great grandmother
   ___ 4. great grandfather
   ___ 5. great aunt
   ___ 6. great uncle
   ___ 7. neighbor
   ___ 8. friend
   ___ 9. other (please specify) _____

3. About how old do you think this older person is? _____ years

4. Briefly describe the kind of contact you have or have had with this older person (example, talk on telephone, write letters, visit, etc.). _____
   _____
   _____

5. How frequently do you have contact with this older person? (check one)
   ___ 1. every day
   ___ 2. once a week
   ___ 3. once a month
   ___ 4. several times during the year
   ___ 5. once a year
   ___ 6. never

6. Now we would like to know how you would describe this older person. On each line below, there are pairs of words that have opposite meanings. There are seven spaces between each pair of words which form a scale. For each pair of words, pick the place on the scale that best describes this older person you are thinking about, and place a check mark (✓) in the space.

	Example: rich	___	___	✓	___	___	___	___ poor
1.	pleasant	___	___	___	___	___	___	___ unpleasant
2.	cooperative	___	___	___	___	___	___	___ uncooperative
3.	loving	___	___	___	___	___	___	___ unloving
4.	understanding	___	___	___	___	___	___	___ non-understanding
5.	considerate	___	___	___	___	___	___	___ inconsiderate
6.	young	___	___	___	___	___	___	___ old
7.	flexible	___	___	___	___	___	___	___ inflexible
8.	fast	___	___	___	___	___	___	___ slow
9.	strong	___	___	___	___	___	___	___ weak
10.	open-minded	___	___	___	___	___	___	___ closed minded
11.	active	___	___	___	___	___	___	___ passive
12.	alert	___	___	___	___	___	___	___ non-alert
13.	independent	___	___	___	___	___	___	___ dependent
14.	ambitious, hardworking	___	___	___	___	___	___	___ lacking ambition, lazy
15.	enthusiastic	___	___	___	___	___	___	___ unenthusiastic

V. General Information

Directions: Please write in or check (✓) your response where appropriate.

1. What is the name of your school? _____

2. What home economics courses have you taken or are currently enrolled in? (Check all that apply.)

___ 1. family living
___ 2. child development
___ 3. foods
___ 4. clothing
___ 5. personal development
___ 6. independent living
___ 7. other (please specify) _____

3. What is your sex?

___ 1. Male
___ 2. Female

4. What is your age? _____ years.

5. In what grade are you at school?

___ 1. 7th grade
___ 2. 8th grade
___ 3. 9th grade
___ 4. 10th grade
___ 5. 11th grade
___ 6. 12th grade
___ 7. other (please specify) _____

6. In which of the following locations do you live?

___ 1. rural (farming)
___ 2. rural (non-farming)
___ 3. town (less than 5,000)
___ 4. city (5,000 - 50,000)
___ 5. metropolitan area (over 50,000)
___ 6. other (please specify) _____

7. To which ethnic/racial group do you belong?

___ 1. White/Caucasian
___ 2. Black/Afro-American
___ 3. Asian American
___ 4. Hispanic American
___ 5. Native Indian American
___ 6. Other (please specify) _____

8. (a) What is your father's occupation? _____
Describe what he does in this job. _____
_____
What is your father's highest level of education?
___ 1. grade school
___ 2. high school
___ 3. college degree
___ 4. graduate degree
___ 5. other (please specify) _____
___ 6. don't know

(b) What is your mother's occupation? _____
Describe what she does in this job. _____
_____
What is your mother's highest level of education?
___ 1. grade school
___ 2. high school
___ 3. college degree
___ 4. graduate degree
___ 5. other (please specify) _____
___ 6. don't know

9. Who lives in the same household with you? (Check as many as applicable).

___ 1. Mother
___ 2. Father
___ 3. Stepmother
___ 4. Stepfather
___ 5. Brother(s) (how many? ____)
___ 6. Sister(s) (how many? ____)
___ 7. Stepbrother(s) (how many? ____)
___ 8. Stepsister(s) (how many? ____)
___ 9. Grandmother(s) (how many? ____)
___ 10. Grandfather(s) (how many? ____)
___ 11. Other (please specify) _____ (how many? ____)

10. What is the order of your birth in your family?

___ 1. the only child
___ 2. the oldest child
___ 3. the youngest child
___ 4. a middle child (such as second, third, fourth, etc.)

11. Have you had aging as a topic in a course at school or in a program outside of school?

___ 1. No
___ 2. Yes. Please briefly describe what was discussed:
_____
_____

12. In which of the following organizations are you a member?

___ 1. FHA/HERO
___ 2. 4-H
___ 3. Girl/Boy Scouts
___ 4. Church youth group
___ 5. other (please specify) _____
_____
_____
___ 6. not a member of any organizations

13. Do you ever think about how you will be in old age?

___ 1. No. (Skip to question 15.)
___ 2. Yes

14. Now, we would like for you to think about how you will be in 50 years. In general, how negative or how positive do you think your old age will be? Please circle the number on the scale below that best describes your feelings about your old age.

Very Negative									Very Positive
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

15. Please write in the first name of older people (age 65 and over) with whom you may have contact on a regular basis. Include in this list any stepfamily relatives (for example, stepgrandparents) that you may have. Please check (✓) how frequently you have contact with each.

(a) Older Relatives	Frequency of Contact				
	Daily Contact	Weekly Contact	Monthly Contact	Yearly Contact	No Contact
grandmothers					
_____	___	___	___	___	___
_____	___	___	___	___	___
_____	___	___	___	___	___
_____	___	___	___	___	___
grandfathers					
_____	___	___	___	___	___
_____	___	___	___	___	___
_____	___	___	___	___	___
_____	___	___	___	___	___
great grandmothers					
_____	___	___	___	___	___
_____	___	___	___	___	___
_____	___	___	___	___	___
_____	___	___	___	___	___
great grandfathers					
_____	___	___	___	___	___
_____	___	___	___	___	___
_____	___	___	___	___	___
_____	___	___	___	___	___
great aunt	___	___	___	___	___
great uncle	___	___	___	___	___
other older relatives (please list)					
_____	___	___	___	___	___
_____	___	___	___	___	___
_____	___	___	___	___	___
(b) Older Non-relatives					
neighbor	___	___	___	___	___
friend	___	___	___	___	___
other (please list)					
_____	___	___	___	___	___
_____	___	___	___	___	___
_____	___	___	___	___	___

PLEASE CHECK THAT YOU HAVE RESPONDED TO EACH QUESTION.

THANKS SO MUCH FOR YOUR HELP AND COOPERATION!

Appendix C

IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY

Department of
Home Economics Education
219 MacKay Hall
Ames, Iowa 50011

Telephone 515-294-6444

February 1 , 1985

Dear

The Department of Home Economics Education at Iowa State University is conducting a study to determine secondary students' knowledge of, attitudes toward, and experiences with older adults. This letter concerns obtaining your approval to have a home economics teacher in your school involved in collecting data for the study.

The specific objectives of the study are to:

1. determine the knowledge of secondary students regarding older adults;
2. assess the attitudes of secondary students toward older adults;
3. determine experiences of secondary students with older adults;
4. determine the relationship of secondary students' knowledge, attitudes and experiences to (a) grade level, (b) race/ethnicity, (c) birth order, (d) socioeconomic status, (e) contact with elderly, (f) living arrangement, (g) place of residence, (h) involvement in organizations, and (i) gerontology-related education;
5. make recommendations related to curriculum on aging for secondary vocational home economics programs.

This information seems particularly important considering that demographic trends in the United States indicate the American population is increasingly growing older. Moreover, in Iowa, 13.3 percent of the population is 65 years of age and older, compared with the national average of 11.3 percent. The findings of this study can be used as the basis for curriculum planning for vocational home economics programs in Iowa.

We would like your permission for your home economics teacher to be involved in the study by administering a questionnaire to students in one of her classes. The questionnaire should require no more than 30 minutes of classroom time. The enclosed self-addressed postcard is to confirm your permission for participation in the study. Please indicate your decision for participation and return the card to us by February 13, 1985.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Your assistance will be greatly appreciated. If you have any questions, feel free to call Dr. Ralston at 515-294-3924 or 294-6444.

Sincerely,

Penny A. Ralston

Penny A. Ralston, Ph.D.
Associate Professor
Home Economics Education

Theodora Alexander

Theodora Alexander, M.Ed.
Research Assistant
Home Economics Education

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Enclosure

Department of
Home Economics Education
166 LeBaron Hall
Ames, Iowa 50011

IOWA STATE
UNIVERSITY

Telephone 515-294-6444

February 13, 1985

Dear Teacher:

The Department of Home Economics Education at Iowa State University is conducting a study to determine secondary students' knowledge of, attitudes toward, and experiences with older adults. This letter seeks to obtain your approval for your willingness to participate in the study.

The specific objectives of the study are to:

1. determine the knowledge of secondary students regarding older adults;
2. assess the attitudes of secondary students toward older adults;
3. determine experiences of secondary students with older adults;
4. determine the relationship of secondary students' knowledge, attitudes and experiences to (a) grade level, (b) race/ethnicity, (c) birth order, (d) socioeconomic status, (e) contact with elderly, (f) living arrangement, (g) place of residence, (h) involvement in organizations, and (i) gerontology-related education;
5. make recommendations related to curriculum on aging for secondary vocational home economics programs.

This information seems particularly important considering that demographic trends in the United States indicate the American population is increasingly growing older. Moreover, in Iowa, 13.3 percent of the population is 65 years of age and older, compared with the national average of 11.3 percent.

We would like for you to be involved in the study by administering a questionnaire to students in one of your classes. The questionnaire should require no more than 30 minutes of classroom time. Your principal has approved the school's participation in the study.

To meet the requirements for the study, we would like to have a home economics classroom that fulfills the following criteria:

1. classroom with at least 15 students
2. classroom with both male and female students
3. classroom in which the majority of students is in the 10th or 12th grade

If you also teach junior high or middle school students, we would like to use a classroom in which there are mostly 7th graders.

February 13, 1985
Page 2

The enclosed self-addressed postcard is to confirm that you have a classroom which meets the above criteria, and that you are willing to participate in the study. Please indicate your willingness to participate and return the card to us by February 22, 1985.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Your assistance will be greatly appreciated. If you have any questions, feel free to call Dr. Ralston at 515-294-3924 or 294-6444.

Sincerely,

Penny A. Ralston

Penny A. Ralston, Ph.D.
Associate Professor
Home Economics Education

Theodora Alexander

Theodora Alexander, M.Ed.
Research Assistant
Home Economics Education

gb

Enclosure

_____ I give my permission for the home economics teacher to participate in the study to determine secondary student's knowledge of, attitudes toward, and experiences with older adults.

_____ I do not give my permission for the home economics teacher to participate in the study.

Signature of Principal _____

Name of School _____

PAR/TA PLEASE RETURN BY FEBRUARY 13, 1984.

_____ I have a classroom which meets the criteria needed for your study and I am willing to participate in the study. Grade level(s) and number of students: _____

_____ I do not have a classroom which meets the criteria needed for your study and wish not to participate.

Signature of Teacher _____

Name of School _____

PAR/TA PLEASE RETURN BY February 22, 1985.

Directions to Teachers for Administering Instrument, "My Views of Older People"

"My Views of Older People" is a questionnaire being administered to secondary home economics students in Iowa to determine their knowledge of, attitudes toward, and experiences with older adults. The findings of the study will be used to make recommendations for the teaching of aging in secondary home economics programs.

According to our records, you have the following grade levels and students that meet the criteria for the study:

Grades	Number of Students
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Before administering the instrument, please do the following:

1. Read through the questionnaire carefully to familiarize yourself with the items. In particular, make certain you understand how students are to respond to each item.

2. Plan to set aside at least 30 minutes of classroom time to administer the instrument. It is recommended that this be done at the beginning of the class period.

3. Call the investigator (Penny Ralston, 515-294-6444) if you have any questions about the instrument or data collection procedures.

Please follow these guidelines for administering the questionnaire to your students:

1. After handing out the questionnaire, read the "Dear Student" section to your students. Emphasize that students' responses are confidential, that their participation is voluntary and that they are free to withdraw from the study at any time.

2. Students may have questions as they complete the questionnaire: You may help students define words that they may not understand. However, do not attempt to interpret the meaning of items. If students have problems understanding an item, read the item to them slowly and indicate the type of response mode they are to use.

3. Let students work at their own pace. When students have finished the questionnaire, ask them to review the instrument to make certain they have answered all items.

(over)

COMMENT SHEET

1. Please list below the number of students who completed the questionnaire and indicate their grade level(s).

Grade Level	Number of Students
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

2. Please indicate average time taken for students to complete questionnaire: _____ minutes.

3. Please list items that students may have asked questions about or had trouble understanding.

Item Number	Page
_____	____
_____	____
_____	____

4. Please briefly discuss any occurrences (for example, fire drill, disciplinary problems, etc.) during the administration of the instrument that might be important for the researcher to know.

5. General comments:

Name: _____

School: _____

Please return with questionnaires in book bag.

Thank you for your help and cooperation!!